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GENERAL NOTES.

Members and friends of the Society are invited to aid the Committee on Publication in carrying out the work of this department. Communications of general interest will be gladly received, and may be sent to SIDNEY D. TOWNLEY, 2023 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, California.

The two astronomers whose portraits are published in this number were the recipients of the Bruce Medal of the Society in the years 1898 and 1899. Some account of the "distinguished services to astronomy" rendered by Professors NEWCOMB and AUWERS will be found in numbers 61 and 67 of these *Publications*.

The following special announcement, by President WHEELER, of the University of California, may be of interest to members of the Society residing in the neighborhood of Berkeley:—

"In connection with the course in Modern Astronomy—Astronomy I —the following lectures will be delivered during the second half of the current academic year by Director JAMES E. KEELER, Astronomer W. W. CAMPBELL, Astronomer R. H. TUCKER, and Astronomer W. J. HUSSEY, of the Lick Astronomical Department:—

Director JAMES E. KEELER:—
  Tuesday, February 6th—The Theory and Construction of Reflecting Telescopes.
  Thursday, February 8th—The Crossley Reflector and its Work.

Astronomer W. W. CAMPBELL:—
  Tuesday, February 20th—Some Results Obtained from Measurements of Stellar Velocities in the Line of Sight.
  Wednesday, February 21st, at 8 P. M.—The Lick Observatory Eclipse Expedition to India.

Astronomer R. H. TUCKER:—
  Tuesday, February 27th—The Meridian Circle.
  Thursday, March 1st—Star Catalogues.

Astronomer W. J. HUSSEY:—
  Tuesday, March 6th, and Thursday, March 8th—Aspects of the Astronomy of Precision.

"Mr. ALEXANDER MCADIE, Honorary Lecturer on Meteorology in the University of California, and Local Forecast Official of the United States Weather Bureau in San Francisco, will deliver a series of four lectures on Meteorology, as a part of the course in Modern Astronomy. His subjects will be as follows:—

Tuesday, March 20th—At the Bottom of the Sea.
Thursday, March 22d—Lightning and Electricity of the Air.
Tuesday, March 27th—Exploring the Atmosphere.
Thursday, March 29th—Forecasting.

"Visitors will be welcome at all times. The lectures will be delivered at the regular hour of the course, 11:15 o'clock, except Professor CAMPBELL'S second one, in the new Astronomical Lecture-room of the Students' Observatory."

Professor WM. HARKNESS, Astronomical Director of the United States Naval Observatory, and Director of the Nautical

Almanac, has been retired after a service of nearly forty years in the Naval Observatory. His successors are Professor S. J. BROWN, as Director of the Naval Observatory, and Professor H. D. TODD, as Director of the Nautical Almanac. Professor BROWN is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, and has been connected with the Naval Observatory about sixteen years, as Professor of Mathematics. Professor TODD, likewise Professor of Mathematics in the United States Navy, has been chief assistant in the Nautical Almanac Office for some years.

The Rumford Committee of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has appropriated the sum of $500 to Professor E. B. FROST, of the Yerkes Observatory, to assist in the construction of a spectrograph especially designed for the measurement of stellar velocities in the line of sight.—*Science*, *1899*, *Nov. 17*.

Mr. F. E. ROSS, last year Fellow in Astronomy in the University of California, has recently been appointed to the position of Instructor in Mathematics in the University of Nevada.

The library of the Society has lately received a copy of a new work, "Star-Names and Their Meanings," by RICHARD HINCKLEY ALLEN, a member of the Society. The work, published by G. E. STECHERT, New York, contains 547 pages, and presents a very neat appearance. Such a work must of necessity be incomplete, and is almost sure to contain some errors; still it also doubtless contains much that is good and valuable. In the introduction we find the following:—

> "The world-wide field of research that I have endeavored to traverse, containing the records of four or five millenniums, it need hardly be said demands for its exploration the best efforts, long continued, of the scientist and scholar accomplished in archæology, astronomy, literature, and philology. None such, however, has appeared since IDELER's day, nearly a century ago; so that, with the desire of taking up again this most interesting task, and the hope of thus stimulating others more competent to carry it on, I have done what I could, although frankly confessing that I have fallen very far short of my ideal. Originality is not claimed for my book. Much of it has been gathered from widely scattered sources, brought together here for the first time in readily accessible form, although doubtless with errors and certainly with much omission; for while I have sought, as did MILTON's *Il Penseroso*, to
>
> 'sit and rightly spell
> Of every star that heav'n doth show,'

yet in preparing my material I have seen, as Doctor SAMUEL JOHNSON wrote in the preface of his *Dictionary*,—

'that one enquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and to find was not always to be informed.'

So that, following him,—

'I set limits to my work, which would in time be ended though not completed.'

While to temper such criticism as may be bestowed upon my efforts, I quote again from the same source:—

'Dictionaries are like watches; the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true.'"

The work should certainly be in every library.

The report of the Board of Visitors of the United States Naval Observatory, extracts from which were printed in our last number, was transmitted to Congress by the Secretary of the Navy, and has now been printed in full as Senate Document No. 19. That the committee has thoroughly investigated the condition of the observatory, past as well as present, and spent a great deal of time on the report, is plainly evident. The majority of American astronomers will, we believe, heartily indorse the report of the board. Some criticisms might be made upon it; but if the recommendations there suggested are carried out, there can be but little doubt that the efficiency of the observatory will be largely increased. Its organization and government would then be similar to that of the great national observatories of Europe, which have rendered most valuable service to astronomy for many years. It is to be hoped that the proper legislation can be gotten through the present Congress.

Mr. Benjamin S. Mayhew has sent the following observations of November meteors, made at Olive, Winnipeg, Manitoba:—

1899. Nov. 13.	11 P.M. to 2 A.M. No meteors. Sky became overcast at 2 A.M.
14.	11 P.M. to 2:30 A.M. No meteors seen. Sky overcast from 2:30 A.M.
15.	11 P.M. till after midnight, when clouds came. No meteors seen.
16.	Cloudy.
24.	From 11 P.M., for several hours, meteors fell from all parts of the heavens in all directions, about eight every five minutes. Most of them were small; occasionally there was a brilliant one. For an hour before dawn they fell at about the same rate, and of similar appearance. (The shower of November 24th, above noted, was probably a portion of the *Bielid* shower from the radiant in *Andromeda*, which was reported by Professor YOUNG, as observed at Princeton.)

The following is an extract from a letter to Professor J. E. KEELER:—

> "It may be of slight interest to you to know that the *Leonids* were carefully looked for by me during the nights November 13–16th. Unfortunately, they were totally overcast, except from 4 to 5 A.M., November 15th = $14^d\ 4^h\ 30^m$ to $5^h\ 30^m$, G. M. T. (Lat. of ship being 11° S.; Long. 168½° E.). During this hour I counted about twenty shooting-stars in *Leo Major* and *Minor*, and next day (November 16th), from 4:30 to 5 A.M. = $15^d\ 4^h\ 40^m$ to $5^h\ 10^m$, G. M. T. (Lat. 7½ S.; Long. 172 E), I counted about fifteen shooting-stars, all from near γ *Leonis Majoris*, but was so disgusted with the weather that I took no notice of their paths.
>
> FRANCIS J. BAYLDON, (2d Officer), S. S. *Warrimoo*.
>
> December 4, 1899.

The *Astronomische Nachrichten*, Nos. 3606–3607, contains the definitive elements of the orbit of Comet 1894 IV (E. SWIFT) by one of the members of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, Mr. FREDERICK H. SEARES. From a careful discussion of the seventy-five observations secured of this comet between the dates of November 21, 1894, and January 29, 1895, Mr. SEARES derives the following definitive elements:—

Epoch, 1894, Dec. 1.0. Osculation, 1894, Dec. 10.0.

$$
\begin{array}{rrrrrl}
M_0 = & 8^\circ & 22' & 58''.2 & \pm\ 4''.2 & \\
\pi = & 345 & 23 & 11\ .1 & \pm\ 4\ .4 & \left.\right\} \\
\Omega = & 48 & 48 & 23\ .4 & \pm\ 27\ .7 & \left.\right\}\ 1900.0 \\
i = & 2 & 57 & 55\ .8 & \pm\ 1\ .4 & \left.\right\} \\
\phi = & 34 & 51 & 37\ .3 & \pm\ 7\ .1 & \\
\mu = & \multicolumn{5}{l}{605''.9999 \pm 0''.0665}
\end{array}
$$

In his discussion, Mr. SEARES has given especial attention to the places of the comparison-star used. "Practically all of the existing catalogues were searched," and the adopted positions depend upon a careful consideration of the relative weights of these catalogues. The effect of *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, *Mars*, and the Earth upon the positions of the comet has also been fully taken into account.

Aside from the shortness of its period — a little less than six years — this comet is interesting to astronomers, from the fact that it may be identical with the lost comet of DE VICO — 1844 I. Mr. SEARES has undertaken the investigation of this question — the calculation of the definitive elements here noticed being the first part of the work.

As the comet returns to perihelion about August 20, 1900, a search ephemeris will be of great interest to those engaged in the pursuit of comet-seeking, and we suppose that Mr. SEARES will publish such an ephemeris in the near future.

Some time ago a letter was addressed to the directors of the observatories of the Pacific Coast, asking for a statement of the work accomplished at each of these institutions during the year 1899. From the answers received, the following accounts have been written:—

CHABOT OBSERVATORY.—Being a part of the school system of the city of Oakland, this observatory is used chiefly for purposes of instruction. Two nights a week are set apart for classes from the schools, and special evenings are given to classes from schools and academies outside of the city. The observatory is open to the public two or three evenings of the week, and a time-service for the city of Oakland, is also maintained. Mr. BURCKHALTER writes, that all his spare time for several months in 1899 was spent in perfecting his apparatus for photographing the corona in the coming eclipse, which he expects to observe in Georgia. Experience at the Indian eclipse in 1898 showed some defects in the apparatus, but these have now been remedied, and Mr. BURCKHALTER thinks that the corona, weather permitting, cannot possibly get away from him next May.

LATITUDE OBSERVATORY.— Observations have been commenced at the Latitude Observatory, in Ukiah, but Dr SCHLESINGER reports slow progress, on account of bad weather. The first latitude observations were made on October 11th, and the following is a summary of the work accomplished from that date until the end of the year:—

1899.	Nights.	Pairs.
October	12	146
November	12	102
December	13	179
Totals	37	427

LICK OBSERVATORY.—Through the "Notices from the Lick Observatory," the readers of these *Publications* are kept pretty well informed concerning the work carried on in that institution. Director KEELER'S report to the President of the University, for the year ending September 1, 1899, was printed in full in *Science*, November 10th, and is therefore not reprinted here. The report is very interesting, however, and the attention of the members of the Society is called to it. Concerning the nature and plan of the work of the observatory, we quote the following introductory remarks from Director KEELER'S report: "The nature of the scientific work undertaken at the Lick Observatory is determined by such considerations as the unusually fine atmospheric conditions which prevail here, the nature of the instrumental equipment, and the number of observers on the staff. The general policy of the observatory is to carry on investigations which cannot be pursued to so great advantage elsewhere. Thus, comets which are bright enough to be easily seen at the leading observatories receive only occasional attention, while comets which, by reason of their faintness or unfavorable position, are difficult of observation, are followed as closely as possible. Elaborate investigations, dealing with large masses of data, and requiring a large force of computers, can only be undertaken by richly endowed observatories or by those which receive Government assistance. The Lick Observatory makes the most of its natural advantages; and extended theoretical researches which can be made as well in a city as at a fine observing-station do not form a part of our general plan."

LOWE OBSERVATORY.—It is gratifying to note that Dr. SWIFT, Director of the Lowe Observatory, although afflicted with failing eyesight, has been able during the past year to add a comet and several nebulæ to his long list of discoveries.

STUDENTS' OBSERVATORY.—The work at the Students' Observatory, Berkeley, is nearly all in the line of instruction, and the time of the members of the staff is given to directing and supervising the work of students rather than to research work. Professor LEUSCHNER, Director of the observatory, states that the Faculties of the University, in conjunction with the astronomers of the Lick Observatory, are now engaged in elaborating a comprehensive course of instruction, graduate as well as undergraduate, covering seven years, and leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in three different lines,—Astronomy, Astrophysics, or Geodesy. A large part of the graduate work is to be done at Mt. Hamilton. We hope in a future number of these *Publications* to give a detailed account of the proposed plan. A new lecture-room has recently been added to the observatory, and this affords much needed room for accommodating the large classes in Modern Astronomy. The room is provided with every convenience for lantern-slide work, projecting spectra, etc. During the past year instruction was given in the following courses: Modern Astronomy, General Astronomy, History of Astronomy, Theoretical Astronomy, Method of Least Squares, Mechanical Quadratures, Interpolation and the Use of Tables, Graduate Course in Theoretical Astronomy, Graduate Course in Perturbations, and several courses in observatory work. During the term just past the total enrollment was 137, of whom eight were graduate students. The following may be mentioned among the special lines of work carried out by the students during the past year: Computation of the orbits of Comet 1898 VIII (CHASE) and Comet 1899 V (GIACOBINI); computation of the elements and the path of the shadow of the total solar eclipse for May 28, 1900; a determination, upon seven nights, of the difference of longitude between the Students' Observatory and the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Observatory in San Francisco, including a least square reduction of the observations and also of all the previous determinations of longitude of the observatory.

UNITED STATES COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY OBSERVATORY.—This observatory, situated in the Presidio Reservation, San Francisco, is used as a longitude base for the determination of new stations by telegraphic time-signals and for practice of observers. Captain AUG. F.

RODGERS, Assistant in Coast Survey, and in charge of the observatory, writes, however, that no new determinations were made during the past year.

From the *Comptes Rendus* of the 18th of December, 1899, we learn that the Lalande Prize, of 540 francs, has this year been awarded by the French Academy of Sciences to Mr. W. R. BROOKS for his record in the discovery of comets.

The Valz Prize, of 460 francs, has been awarded by the same body to M. NYRÉN, of the Pulkowa Observatory, for his work in the field of sidereal astronomy.